

August 8, 2009

**OBHEY SHOWS SECRETARY SALAZAR APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE
APPROPRIATIONS CHAIRMAN AND INTERIOR SECRETARY REVIEW EFFORTS TO
PRESERVE THE PARK**

BAYFIELD, WI – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) was in Bayfield today to show the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore to the new Interior Secretary, Ken Salazar. The Secretary was briefed on the specific needs of the park, including the work that will be done as part of the \$5 million Obey was able to secure to help the park restore its historic lighthouses. The Park is home to one of the finest collections of historic 19th century lighthouses in the country.

“When people talk about National Parks, they tend to think of the more well known parks like Yellowstone or Glacier,” said Obey “but, the Apostle Islands are as beautiful as they are unique and I was anxious to show it to the Secretary. Raspberry Island Lighthouse has been called the ‘Showplace of the Apostles’ and it’s great to show this place off and see the reaction of those who have never been here before.”

Previous funding secured by Obey has enabled the Park to restore Raspberry Island. The newly provided restoration funding will allow the Park to begin work on Michigan and Outer Island lighthouses. The Michigan Island Lighthouse will receive extensive exterior and interior repairs and will be available in the future for self-guided tours. The Outer Island Lighthouse will receive critical stabilization work. And, emergency repairs will be performed on the Devil’s Island Fresnel Lens.

“This means we have an opportunity to put more people to work. There will be carpenters working on these historic buildings, repairing the lighthouses and docks, and people on maintenance crews repairing the trails, campsites and the backcountry facilities and the like,” Obey said.

Beyond the 60 jobs the park supports directly, the Apostles have boosted good paying seasonal employment which numbers between 50 and 100 jobs. In addition, the park is estimated to generate more than 300 jobs in the local economy because of tourists who come to the park and use local accommodations, restaurants and services. In fact, the Apostles economic benefit is estimated to exceed that of some of the most popular national parks like Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota and Big Bend National Park in Texas.

Obey, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, wanted to have Secretary Salazar see firsthand both Sand and Michigan islands, where renovation work has yet to begin, or is just underway, to compare these efforts and see the difference these renovation projects make. “I really wanted the Secretary to see the park, enjoy its beauty and see how taxpayers’ money is being used to upgrade the park and helping the local economy out at the same time,” said Obey.

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